

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250010
Site Address:	71 London Road, Wokingham, RG40 1YA
Expiry Date:	7 April 2025
Site Visit Date:	1 November 2024
Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use of the property to supported living accommodation (Use Class C2), plus erection of a two storey front/side extension and a single storey side/rear extension, associated landscaping, parking, installation of PV panels and bin storage, following demolition of the existing attached garage and single storey rear extension.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Water Utility Consultation Zones
Green Routes and Riverside Paths
Archaeological Sites
Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Wokingham (Major Development Location)
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone – Green Risk Zone
Nuclear Consultation Zone – Special Case Zone
Landscape Character Assessment Area
Land Terrier
SSSI Impact Risk Zones

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP17 – Housing Delivery
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB05 – Housing Mix

	TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB09 – Residential Accommodation for Vulnerable Groups TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB25 – Archaeology
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

No planning history for the site.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Property Services – No comments received
WBC Environmental Health – No comments received
WBC Drainage – No objection subject to condition(s)
WBC Highways – No objection subject to condition(s)
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection subject to condition(s)
WBC Health and Wellbeing – No comments received
WBC CIL – No comments received
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments received
WBC Ecology – Request further info but otherwise no objections (see main body of report)

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received
Berkshire Archaeology – No comments received
South East Water – No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objections, support the scheme.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a modest two storey detached dwellinghouse located on London Road, Wokingham. The dwelling's frontage is well landscaped with mature hedging, with a gravel vehicular access being located to the west of the site leading to a rear parking area. The rear garden is generous in size and is characterised by several small fruit trees and other areas of landscaping.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential, but the site also lies adjacent to Wokingham's Town Centre. Surrounding properties, in particular nos. 75 and 77

London Road, have been substantially altered with extensions.

Proposal Description:

This application seeks approval for the proposed change of use of the site to supported living accommodation (Use Class C2), plus the erection of a two storey front/side extension and a single storey side/rear extension, associated landscaping, parking, installation of PV panels and bin storage, following demolition of the existing attached garage and single storey rear extension.

The Design and Access statement clarifies that the use of the site would be to provide living accommodation for adult support care leavers. The accommodation is described as 'semi-independent'.

Principle of Development:

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. Policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy states that to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities (including the provision of community facilities) to meet long term needs, planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements of:

- People with special needs, including those with a physical, sensory or learning disability or problems accessing services;

The development involves providing accommodation for vulnerable adults leaving support care. The proposals are therefore supported in principle as per Policy CP2.

The site is also located within settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

Section 5 of the NPPF states that in order to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing including the needs of different groups in the community. This is reinforced in Policy TB09 of the MDD Local Plan – “Residential Accommodation for Vulnerable Groups” – which states that the Council will in principle support proposals which provide for several different types of accommodation to provide for people’s needs over a lifetime. This includes the provision of extra care homes, dementia units, enhanced sheltered schemes and proposals that allow the elderly and those with disabilities to remain in their own home.

The proposed change of use would result in the loss of a residential dwelling. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy which states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

- Do not lead to a net loss of dwellings and other residential accommodation or land;

The proposal retains the overarching residential nature of the property by providing living accommodation which is another type of residential accommodation. Moreover, the proposed change of use would help provide an important community facility within the borough in accordance with Section 5 of the NPPF, CP2 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB09 of the MDD Local Plan and help meet the needs of a group of people (i.e. children) with protected characteristics. The Planning Authority affords significant weight to meeting these needs.

Character of the Area:

The proposed two storey side extension would have a hip to flat roof form and would comply with the Borough Design Guide in that it would be legibly set back from the dwelling's principal building line and set down from the main roof's ridge height. The extension would also be set in 0.5 metres from the site boundary.

The flat roof form proposed is relatively incongruous and out of keeping with the host dwelling, but it is noted that there are several examples of large two storey flat roof forms within immediate proximity to the application site. The hipped roof element would also partly obscure its form and overall, the extension would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area.

Turning to the rear extension proposed, it would have a flat roof would and would protrude approximately 6.4 metres from the rear of the dwelling, wrapping slightly around the dwelling's western side elevation. Its form would be well screened from the roadside and is unlikely to generate any adverse visual impacts.

The bin store on the site's frontage is sited as to be visually screened by the existing privet hedging. The form of the bin store structures is both modest and would have no adverse impact on the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Loss of Light and Overbearing

Due to the orientations of both the site and no.75 London Road (exclusively south facing gardens), there are no anticipated loss of light impacts onto no.75's eastern side elevation which contains several secondary/high level habitable windows and bathrooms.

Furthermore, the two-storey side extension would retain an approximate 3.4 metre separation distance from no.75's eastern side elevation. Combined with its modest eaves/ridge heights, there are no adverse overbearing concerns.

The single storey rear extension raises no concerns on these grounds.

Overlooking

No first-floor side windows are proposed. The front and rear fenestration within the two-storey side extension would maintain the same outlook as the existing dwelling which is acceptable.

The single storey rear extension raises no concerns on these grounds.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

General

The applicant proposes to change the use of the existing dwelling to a semi-independent HMO for adult care leavers to transit from full care to independent living. It is relevant to note that the same group of staff will work between the proposed site and the existing semi-independent at 75 London Road.

The proposal provides six individual bedrooms and increases the numbers of habitable rooms from 7 to 9. As the existing 7.6m x 2.2m garage does not fully meet the council's requirement for car parking, there will be no loss of parking space from the garage. Four driveway parking spaces are proposed within the red line.

With all proposed habitable rooms to be used by the local care leavers, the Highways assume the travel patterns of such development to be closer to a shared dwelling with multiple studio flats (Use Class C3) than residential care home (Use Class C2) as no additional staff will be employed.

Access

The proposed access is widened by removing the existing privet. Proposed parking spaces can still be provided by utilising the existing dropped crossing, which is acceptable.

However, if the applicant may wish to widen the dropped crossing to facilitate vehicles manoeuvring, separate consent will be required from the TM team for the proposed width and location of the new dropped crossing.

Parking

According to the WBC Car Parking Standards, the development in an Urban location requires 0.5 parking space for each habitable room or 0.5 parking space for each studio flat within the red line boundary. Each parking space shall be independent and shall have minimum dimensions of 5.0m x 2.5m.

The applicant has revised the parking plan to provide three driveway parking spaces of dimensions 5m x 2.5m at the rear of the dwelling, and one parking space of dimensions 4.8m x 2.4m in front of the existing garage, by utilising the dropped

crossing.

Highways welcome the proposed revision.

Cycle Provisions

The applicant proposes secured and covered cycle stores for six cycles at the rear of the garden for cycle storage, which will be welcomed.

Refuse Collection Strategy

The position of the proposed bin store does not affect parking or vehicle manoeuvring, which is acceptable.

Amenity Space:

Internal:

The bedrooms and living areas proposed within the building meets the minimum standards required for their occupancy levels and would provide adequate internal space to serve future occupiers.

External:

The Borough Design Guide specifies a minimum depth of 11 metres for rear gardens and a 1 metre set-back from the site boundary to allow access thereto.

The rear garden depth would far exceed the 11 metre minimum and would remain adequate to serve the occupants of the site.

Flooding and Drainage:

The site and access are located within Flood Zone 1. WBC Drainage have no objections to the proposals providing a drainage strategy is secured via condition. This request is considered unnecessary given the scale of the proposals as aside from the change of use, the proposals simply involve modest domestic extensions to an existing residential site.

Landscape and Trees:

The proposed development would retain the site's existing verdant frontage that is characterised by two privet hedges. Tree protection fencing would also be installed around them to ensure they are protected through the construction of the proposals.

To the rear, several small trees (largely fruit trees or small saplings) are to be removed. However, several replacement trees are proposed in the rear garden, details of which will be secured via a landscaping condition. The existing, larger trees in the rear garden would also be protected with fencing to facilitate the construction of the extended parking area.

Overall, subject to a landscaping condition and compliance with the arboricultural information submitted, WBC Landscape and Trees raise no objections to the proposed development.

Ecology:

Bats:

The application is supported by a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (Arbtech, November 2024) and a further Endoscope Survey (Arbtech, March 2025).

WBC Ecology are satisfied with the results in that they adequately rule out the presence of roosting bats. Mitigation and enhancements for protected and notable species should be implemented during vegetation clearance, demolition and construction in accordance with the recommendations made in the recommendations made in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment V2.0. As recommended by the Ecologists at least one bat tube or woodcrete bat box and integrated bird boxes should be provided to provide additional nesting for birds and bat roost habitat.

Compliance with these measures will be secured via condition.

Lighting:

The applicant previously proposed up & down lighters on the elevations of the building. WBC Ecology raised issue with the 'up' aspect of the lighters (due to impacts on bats) but these have since been revised to ensure the lighters installed facing downwards only.

WBC Ecology requested a lighting strategy condition, but this request was considered unnecessary by the Planning Officer due to the low risk of bats at the site, plus lighting of this scale is not considered development.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

This application is supported by a BNG Metric and Assessment Report (Arbtech, February 2025).

Initially, WBC Ecology raised concerns with the proposed on-site enhancements for habitat units. This was because the land proposed for this purpose was standard garden land that would be continuously used by occupants of the building/dwelling.

As such, the BNG metric was revised, with an alternative approach chosen of acquiring off-site Biodiversity Credits which, at the time of writing this report, is still in the process of being finalised.

Details of the Biodiversity Credits secured privately will need to be submitted as part of the Biodiversity Gain Plan prior to the commencement of development.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council

will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010): In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	27 March 2025
Earliest date for decision:	3 February 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	27.3.25